

A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF ANT FROM GUATEMALA (HYMENOPTERA, FORMICIDÆ)

BY MARION R. SMITH

BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY AND PLANT QUARANTINE, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
ADMINISTRATION, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The species described below possesses such unusual characters that I have assigned it to a new genus, *Perissomyrmex*, the name meaning "strange ant." Though definitely belonging to the subfamily Myrmicinae, its exact tribal placement is questionable. This is especially true since no winged forms are available for study. Even though these forms are lacking, I am provisionally placing the species in the tribe Myrmecini.

The most outstanding characters of the new genus are: The 9-segmented antenna with a more or less distinct 3-segmented club; median region of the clypeus with denticulate anterior border; lateral border of the clypeus forming a trenchant ridge in front of the antennal fossa; frontal carina poorly developed, not lobed, thus exposing base of scape and fossa; mandible elongate, with 3-toothed masticatory border and another tooth on the superior border; promesonotal suture obsolescent or absent, mesoepinotal impression well developed; epinotum with a pair of spines; anterior tibia with well developed, pectinate spur, each middle and posterior tibia without spurs; petiole and postpetiole nodiform, the former also pedunculate.

Ants of this new genus resemble those of *Pristomyrmex*, but the resemblance is more superficial than real. There is a difference in the number of antennal segments, presence or absence of tibial spurs, development of frontal carinae and other characters; furthermore, no *Pristomyrmex* is known to occur in the Americas, the genus being native to Indo-China, Japan, Malaysia, New Guinea and Australia. *Perissomyrmex* may be an ancient genus whose taxonomic position and affinities cannot be determined until more specimens are available for study.

WORKER.—Small, apparently monomorphic. Head large; pos-

terior border not emarginate; sides convex, strongly divergent anteriorly. No ocelli. Eye located anterior to the middle of the side of the head, protuberant but small. Frontal area distinct, subtriangular. Frontal carina very poorly developed, not lobed, thus exposing the base of the scape and the antennal fossa. Median region of the clypeus flattened, its anterior border with 4 more or less irregular teeth, the 2 central teeth largest; lateral border of clypeus extended in front of antennal fossa as a trenchant ridge. Antenna 9-segmented; apex of scape surpassing the posterior border of the head when the scape is fully extended posteriorly; last 3 funicular segments enlarged, forming a more or less distinct club. Mandible elongate; masticatory border with 3 teeth, superior border with a prominent tooth slightly anterior to its middle.

Promesonotal suture obsolescent or absent. Mesoepinotal impression well developed. Epinotum bearing a pair of sharp spines which are not as long as the space between their apices, the spines divergent but also directed posteriorly and upward. In profile, the promesonotum evenly arched, meeting the almost horizontal base of the epinotum at the mesoepinotal impression. Legs slender but with slightly incrassated femora and tibiae. Anterior tibia with a well developed, pectinate spur, middle and posterior tibiae without spurs. Petiole and postpetiole from above, slender, with a compressed appearance; in profile, the petiole pedunculate and bearing a convex node; the postpetiolar node higher than that of the petiole and its dorso-ventral axis with an oblique slope.

Gaster from above, oval, broadest at the base and without humeri, the basal segment occupying most of the gaster.

Genotype.—*Perissomyrmex snyderi*, new species.

***Perissomyrmex snyderi*, new species**

(Figs. 1, 1a, 2)

WORKER.—Length 3.5 mm.

Frontal area, dorsal surface of petiole and postpetiole, and gaster, smooth and shining. Head and thorax with a rugulose sculpturing which has a general longitudinal trend, that on the pronotum however somewhat arcuate and that on the epinotum transverse. Mandible coarsely striated.

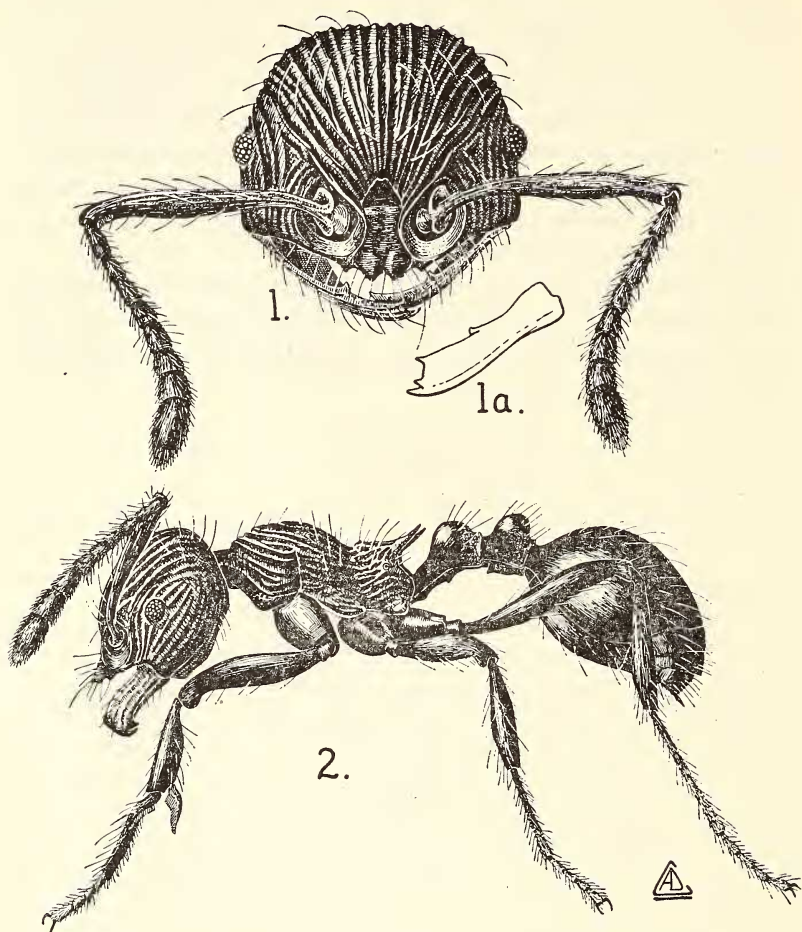
Body and appendages covered with moderately abundant, long, simple, yellowish hairs. Clypeus with a row of anteriorly directed hairs which are of variable length.

Body black; mandible lighter, tarsi light brown.

Type locality.—Guatemala (specific locality unknown).

Described from a holotype and a paratype worker collected at Hoboken, N. J., January 13, 1947, by Miss Ruth F. Olsen of the inspection force of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, United States Department of Agriculture. The ants were found in the tuberous root of a begonia plant, the shipment of which originated in Guatemala. Both specimens have been placed in the United States National Museum; they bear U. S. N. M. No. 58310. The species is named for Dr. Thomas E. Snyder, the eminent termite specialist.

The paratype does not differ materially from the holotype except that one of its lateral clypeal teeth is of approximately the same size as either one of the central clypeal teeth. The paratype is also slightly shorter, 3.4 mm.



Worker of *Perissomyrmex snyderi* new species. Fig. 1, head. Fig. 1a, mandible. Fig. 2, body in profile. (Illustrations by Arthur D. Cushman.)